



# Horizon Europe Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF)

## European Fellowships

**Postdoctoral Fellowship (Call ID [HORIZON-MSCA-2021-PF-01-01](#))**

Call Opening Date: 22 June 2021

Closing date for submission: 12 October 2021 - 17:00 Brussels time

### 1. Horizon Europe and MSCA programme

'Horizon Europe' (2021-2027) is the new research and innovation framework programme of the European Union and, as under the previous programme 'Horizon 2020', it offers opportunities for both collaborative research and mobility of researchers.

The mobility actions are under Pillar 1 of Horizon Europe, under the well-known **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)** programme.

This flyer outlines the scope and modalities to participate in the **MSCA - Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF) for European Fellows (Indian nationals interested in pursuing research in Europe)**. The flyer aims at helping postdoctoral aspirants in applying for the grant, providing guidance on the formalities to comply with and facilitating project preparation. It is without prejudice to the call text itself, which remains the basis for applying and should always be consulted in full.

### 2. Main Objectives of a Postdoctoral Fellowship (PF)

- Foster excellence through implementation of original and personalised research
- Enhance the creative and innovative potential of researchers holding a PhD (training on research + transferable skills) + support to career development
- Focus on i3 (international, inter sectoral, interdisciplinary) mobility
- Build bridges and lead to exposure to the non-academic sector

### 3. Research areas

The MSCA-PF will continue to support postdoctoral work in all fields of research and innovation (bottom up principle). The novelty in MSCA in Horizon Europe (compared to MSCA-Horizon 2020) is that Euratom<sup>1</sup> areas of research are included in the range of supported topics within the 8 existing scientific panels.

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<sup>1</sup> Indian applicants are, however, not eligible for Euratom research.

The 8 scientific panels are:

- Chemistry (CHE)
- Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC)
- Economic Sciences (ECO)
- Information Science and Engineering (ENG)
- Environment and Geosciences (ENV)
- Life Sciences (LIF)
- Mathematics (MAT)
- Physics (PHY)

Applicants must indicate at the submission stage in which of the eight different scientific areas their proposal fits best.

#### 4. Type of fellowships:

There are two types of Postdoctoral Fellowships:

- (1) **European Fellowships:** open to all researchers (including Indian nationals) currently within or outside Europe and who want to work in an EU Member State (MS) and country associated to Horizon Europe<sup>2</sup>. This fellowship is to be done in Europe.
- (2) **Global Fellowships:** open to researchers currently within or outside Europe who want to move to a host institution located in a Third Country (e.g. India) and then come back to an EU MS/AC (return phase).

With both these actions, the EU is promoting the two way mobility, which is an important element to strengthen the [EU-India Strategic Partnership](#) and the [Connectivity Partnership](#).

This flyer focuses on the **European Fellowship for postdoctoral researchers**. A separate flyer for the Global Fellowship is also posted on the EU Delegation to India's [website](#).

In addition to the European and Global fellowships, there is the possibility to be selected for an **ERA fellowship**: see further point 7 for more detail.

#### 5. Eligibility

- Any nationality
- No age limit
- Mobility Rule: the postdoctoral candidate must not have lived, worked or studied in the country of the future host institute for more than 12 months during the 3 years prior to the call deadline.

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<sup>2</sup> Please see the [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#) on the Portal for up-to-date information on the current list and on the position for country associated to Horizon Europe.

- Fellows must be in a possession of a doctoral degree, at the date of the call deadline. Applicants who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis, but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree, will be considered eligible to apply.
- No more/up to 8 years of full time equivalent (FTE) research experience at the time of application. The eight year period is measured<sup>3</sup> from the date of award of the doctoral degree. Years of experience outside research like teaching, working in industry on non-research areas and career breaks like parental leave, medical leave, national service, and long term sick leave (period of more than 30 days) will not count for the number of years.
- Only one proposal per individual researcher can be submitted. In case of several proposals involving the same individual researcher, only the last submitted one will be considered eligible.
- If proposals with the same research objectives and work plan are submitted by Host Institute for different researchers, only the first submitted one will be considered eligible.

## 6. Who and Where can your host institute be?

- MSCA Fellows can be hosted by public or private sector research actors (universities-research institutes-private companies). Any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector, in any industry or business partnership, is considered as private company.
- The Host Institute can be in any of the EU 27 Member States and in any of the countries associated to Horizon Europe.
- Researchers receiving a Postdoctoral Fellowship may opt to include a **secondment phase**, within the overall duration of their fellowship **in any country worldwide** (thus in India). The secondment phase can be a single period or be divided into shorter mobility periods. Secondments cannot exceed one third of the standard fellowship duration and should be in line with the project objectives, adding significant value and impact to the fellowship.
- Postdoctoral Fellowships can provide **an additional period of up to six months** to support researchers seeking a placement at the end of the project to work on R&I projects in an organisation from the **non-academic sector** established in an EU Member State or country associated to Horizon Europe.

### 27 EU Members States:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania,

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<sup>3</sup> Maternity leave (18 months – i.e. 548 days) per child born after the PhD award date, or exact duration of leave taken, whichever is longest); Paternity leave (exact duration per child born after the PhD award date); Research in a non-associated TC (only for nationals or long-term residents of MS or AC, wishing to reintegrate in Europe); Compulsory national service; Time spent not working in research (also applies to part-time contracts); Long-term sick leave (periods longer than 30 days).

Luxemburg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

18 upcoming associated countries to Horizon Europe:

Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo<sup>4</sup>, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom<sup>5</sup>.

Legal entities established in Switzerland are currently not covered by these transitional arrangements.

Please see the [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#) on the Portal for up-to-date information on the current list and on the position for country associated to Horizon Europe.

## **7. ERA Fellowships**

European Research Area (ERA) Fellowships have been aligned with the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021, and are funded through the Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area part of the ‘Horizon Europe’ Work Programme. The fellowships offer a “second chance” of funding for fellows with host institutions in the “widening countries”.

The “Widening Countries” are:

15 EU Member States:

Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

14 upcoming Associated Countries to Horizon Europe:

Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Kosovo<sup>6</sup>, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

The best ranked MSCA-PF proposals with host institution in one of the “Widening countries” that are not funded due to lack of budget (and are just under the “cut-off-score”) will be funded from the ‘Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence’ part of Horizon Europe. In the application for MSCA-PF, the fellow must indicate that if not selected for funding, he/she wants to apply for the ERA Fellowship. After the MSCA-PF evaluation is completed, if the proposal is not selected for lack of funding, but is eligible for ERA

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<sup>4</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

<sup>5</sup> The UK is associating to the full Horizon Europe programme with the only exception of the EIC Fund (which is the loan/equity instrument of the EIC).

<sup>6</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Fellowship, it is automatically “resubmitted” to the ERA Fellowship call (with the score the proposal received in the MSCA-PF evaluation).

## 8. How does it work?

- The project proposal will be written jointly by the postdoctoral candidate and the host institute, whether from the academic or non-academic sector (a single independent legal entity) established in an EU Member State or country associated to Horizon Europe.
- Candidate together with the host organisation apply to the call published.
- All MSCA-PF proposals must be submitted electronically using the electronic submission system of the [Funding and Tender Portal](#). Only the Host supervisor should press the "submit" button and take any other actions in the name of the organisation.
- European host institute receives the funding and recruits the awarded researcher.

## 9. Who is involved in the application?

- **Applicant** (called 'Fellow'): the postdoctoral researcher who will be preparing the fellowship application.
- **Supervisor** (or ‘Primary Coordinator Contact’): person who will be supervising the fellow and the project. The Fellow should develop the project proposal in liaison with the Supervisor. To ensure that Supervisor fulfils supervision in compliance with highest standards and that researcher can benefit from best environment to work in, the European Commission has issued some guidelines<sup>7</sup> to that effect.
- **Beneficiary** (also called 'Host Institution'): this is the University, institute or company validated by the EU as a 'legal entity' with [Participant Identification Code \(PIC\)](#).
- **Administrative Coordinator Contact**: the administrative person acting on behalf of the beneficiary.

## 10. Duration of a project: European Fellowships: 12-24 months

## 11. Funding

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<sup>7</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bb02d56e-9b3c-11eb-b85c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>

Contributions for recruited researchers Per person-month					Institutional unit contributions Per person-month	
Living allowance	Mobility allowance	Family allowance (if applicable)	Long-term leave allowance (if applicable)	Special needs allowance (if applicable)	Research, training and networking contribution	Management and indirect contribution
EUR 5 080	EUR 600	EUR 660	EUR 5 680 x % covered by the beneficiary	Requested unit <sup>1</sup> x (1/number of months)	EUR 1 000	EUR 650

\* Living allowance is adapted with the country correction coefficient listed in the WP. EF= 1 coefficient for the country of the beneficiary

## 12. Evaluation Criteria

Three evaluation criteria:

- Excellence (which accounts for 50% of the score): quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives; soundness of the proposed methodology; quality of the supervision, training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host; and quality and appropriateness of the researcher's professional experience, competences and skills. Gender dimension and open science to be addressed.
- Impact (30%): credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researcher; suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts; and magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts
- Implementation (20%): quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and quality and capacity of the host institutions

**Seal of Excellence:** Seals of Excellence will be awarded to applications with a total score equal to or higher than 85%. The Seal is awarded to proposals that exceed in all of the three evaluation thresholds (listed above) set out in this work programme, but cannot be funded due to lack of budget. The EU seal adds weight to researcher's application, when they seek to apply to other funding sources offered by EU Member States.

## 13. Result and starting date

The proposals will be evaluated in November-December 2021 and the results will be communicated at the earliest by March/April 2022. The approximate date for signing the Grant Agreement and **starting the project** will be around **May-September 2022**.

#### 14. **India and MSCA**

- More than 1900 Indian researchers (of which 31% are women) throughout all MCSA schemes, were funded under Horizon 2020 MCSA (2014-2020). Among all third countries, India ranked 2nd just behind China.
- 449 Indian researchers were awarded the Horizon 2020 MSCA Individual Fellowships in the period 2014-2020, of which 85 IF under the last Horizon 2020 MCSA-IF call, which makes India first ranked among third country beneficiaries.
- Social Sciences and Engineering remain the top two focus areas of research for Indian applicants.

#### 15. **Proposal structure**

- The proposal is divided into two parts: **Part A** and **Part B**.
- **Part A** includes administrative and financial information of the host institution (beneficiary) and the researcher.
- **Part B** includes the description of scientific and training activities. **Part B-1**, which introduces the beneficiary and partner organisations and describes the **excellence**, **impact** and **implementation** aspects of the proposal can **be maximum 10 pages** long. **Part B-2**, contains the researcher's CV, a description of the participating organisations, an ethical self-assessment.

#### 16. **Some Hints for preparation of proposal**

##### **Excellence**

- Be precise about objectives. Explain the contribution that your project is expected to make.
- What is the applicant's methodology?
- Describe originality & innovative aspects of the applicant's research - Why is your project worth funding?
- Explain how the high-quality, novel research is most likely to open up the best career possibilities for the applicant.
- How will the project allow you to move towards research independence?
- Why are the host institution and supervisor ideal for the research project you aim to conduct?
- Describe how this project will contribute to your own research career development. Clearly describe which new competencies you will acquire through the fellowship.
- What type of skills and knowledge will you transfer on the host institution?

##### **Impact**

- Impact of training on career development of the applicant and the host institution (be precise).
- List expected publications expected to result from the research project (be precise i.e. concrete journal names).

- What is your IPR strategy?
- Be precise about your outreach activities.

### **Implementation**

- Add a realistic GANTT Chart
- Work packages, deliverables, milestones
- Describe experimental risks and your contingency plan

## **17. Useful Links**

### **Euraxess Portal (PhD and post-doctorate vacancies, more information)**

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/>

### **List of National Contact Points**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp>

### **Research Inquiry Service**

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/contact/research-enquiry-service-and-participant-validation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/contact/research-enquiry-service-and-participant-validation_en)

### **Funding and Tenders Portal (calls, applications, etc.)**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

### **MCAA (Alumni association)**

<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu>

Information can also be obtained from:

MSCA | [REA-MSCA-HE-PF-EUROPEAN@ec.europa.eu](mailto:REA-MSCA-HE-PF-EUROPEAN@ec.europa.eu)

EU DEL India | [delegation-india-ri@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:delegation-india-ri@eeas.europa.eu)

EURAXESS India | [india@euraxess.net](mailto:india@euraxess.net)